

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /068 W

----- 025722

R 271640Z NOV 76

FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1569

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL OPORTO

COMUSFORAZ

USCINCEUR

CINCLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 0483

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PO

SUBJ: VOTE ON BASE NEGOTIATIONS IN AZOREAN ASSEMBLY

REF: PONTA DELGADA 0477 (DTG 231905Z NOV 76), LISBON 8191
(DTG 241905Z NOV 76)

1. AS EXPECTED ON NOVEMBER 25 THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT EASILY WON BY 22 TO 9 THE VOT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY ON ITS PROPOSAL FOR THE LAJES BASE NEGOTIATIONS. THE SURPRISE WAS THE STATEMENT OF THE CDS DEPUTY WHO CRITICIZED THE PSD REGIONAL GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST FOR THE VOTE CALLING IT DEMAGOGIC AND ACCUSED THE PSD OF PLAYING PARTY POLITICS WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION FACING THE AZORES. HE ALSO FAULTED THE PSD FOR NOT CONSULTING THE OPPOSITION.BOTH DEPUTIES ELECTED BY THE CDS WERE ABSENT WHEN THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE WAS TAKEN. THE 9 SOCIALIST DEPUTIES PRESENT VOTED NO. ONE PS DEPUTY ECHOED A LINE ENUNCIATED EARLIER THIS WEEK BY A MEMBER OF THE GOP TO THE EFFECT THAT THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF SEPARATISM IN THE AZORES; ONE WHICH UESSES TERRORISM (FLA) AND THE OTHER THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT'S GRADUAL PEACEFUL

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ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE. IN ITS EXPLANATION OF ITS VOTE, THE

PS SAID THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY DID NOT HAVE COMPETENCE TO DISCUSS THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS AND FEARED THAT THE PUBLIC AIRING OF THE GOALS WOULD WEAKEN THE GOP'S NEGOTIATING POSITION AND REDUCE THE FINAL QUID TO THE DETRIMENT OF BOTH THE REPUBLIC AND THE REGION.

2. IN HIS DEFENSE OF THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS, MOTA AMARAL MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

--HE FEARED THAT AFTER ALL THE LOANS THE GOP ALREADY HAS RECEIVED FROM THE USG, THE USG DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD TELL THE GOP THAT IT HAD ALREADY PAID THE RENT.
--THE INVESTMENT NEEDS IN THE REGION WERE ENORMOUS; ALL THE GRANT ASSISTANCE INCLUDED IN THE NEW AGREEMENT SHOULD BE USED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE AZORES.
--THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WAS ACTING WITHIN THE CONSTITUTION AND THE STATUTE OF AUTONOMY IN DEFENDING LEGITIMATE AZOREAN INTERESTS IN THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS.
--THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS NEVER AND WILL NEVER SEEK CONFLICTS WITH THE GOP. HE DID NOT KNOW THE REASONS FOR THE PERSISTENT HOSTILITY DEMONSTRATED BY THE GOP TOWARDS THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT.

3. COMMENT: AS ONE LOCAL NEWSPAPER SAID, THE PSD REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WON A BITTER VICTORY. ITS CONTROL OF THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY WAS NEVER IN DOUBT, BUT IT DID NOT RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM THE OPPOSITION PS AND CDS AS MOTA AMARAL HAD HOPED. BEFORE THE VOTE THERE WERE REPORTS THAT THE PS WOULD ABSTAIN AND MOST OBSERVERS EXPECTED THE CDS TO SUPPORT THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT. IF THIS HAD OCCURRED THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WOULD BE IN A STRONGER POSITION TODAY VIS-A-VIS LISBON. MOTA AMARAL AND THE PSD WERE NOT ABLE TO TURN THE ISSUE CLEARLY INTO ONE OF THE AZORES VERSUS LISBON, INSTEAD IT CAME OUT PSD VERSUS PS AND CDS. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT BOTH THE PS AND THE CDS RECEIVED ORIENTATION FROM THEIR NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.

4. IN SPITE OF THE DEBATE OVER THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT'S TACTICS, THERE REMAINS A GENERAL AGREEMENT HERE ABOUT THE NEED FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE AZORES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LAJES BASE NEGOTIATIONS AS THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF FUNDS TO FINANCE THIS DEVELOPMENT.

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THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT THE SOCIALIST HERE HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT THE GOP AND FOREIGN MINISTRY CONTROLLED BY THEIR PARTY, WILL LOOK OUT FOR AZOREAN INTERESTS, BUT THE PSD REGIONAL GOVERNMENT ALARMED BY THE PROBLEMS IT IS HAVING WITH THE GOP IS AFARAIID AZOREAN INTERESTS WILL BE NEGLECTED, AS THEY HAVE BEEN SO MANY TIMES IN THE PAST, IN VIEW OF THE OVERWHELMING NEEDS OF THE CONTINENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, AZORES, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, MILITARY BASES, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PONTA00483
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760440-1134
From: PONTA DELGADA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976119/aaaaahvk.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 PONTA DELGADA 477, 76 LISBON 8191
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 MAR 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <01 SEP 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VOTE ON BASE NEGOTIATIONS IN AZOREAN ASSEMBLY
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006